

# The Prince George's Post



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## Statement From Council Chair Jolene Ivey Council Mourns Passing of the Honorable Douglas J. J. Peters

By KAREN D. CAMPBELL  
Prince George's County Council Media

The Prince George's County Council is deeply saddened by the passing of the Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, former Maryland State Senator, former County Council Member representing District 4, and former member and Mayor Pro Tem of the Bowie City Council.

When asked what he wanted voters to know about him, Doug shared his love and commitment to his family. Our deepest sympathies are with his wife, Corinne, their six adult children, and three grandchildren upon the profound loss of their 'hero.' We cannot imagine your grief.

A United States Army Reserve Captain, Doug Peters served in Operation Desert Storm and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for acts of valor in combat. Elected to serve at the city, county and state levels of government, he was also a visionary whose leadership and meaningful public service as a lawmaker rendered tangible results for our community. His very life defined service.

As a Prince George's County Council

Member committed to education and student achievement for constituents in District 4 and across the County, he obtained funding for the new Northview Elementary School, renovations and upgrades to reopen Whitehall Elementary, Samuel Ogle Middle School, and the Belair Annex as well as renovations at Bowie High School.

Additionally, he secured the initial funding for a new Bowie Fire House and the South Bowie Library. His legacy also includes the Bowie Performing Arts Center, Bowie Senior Center and Bowie Gymnasium, tireless advocacy for youth, safe communities, economic growth and development, and budget and fiscal matters in Prince George's County.

Gifted with a unique business acumen, Doug Peters worked hard to build the capacity of the County's business community, leading both the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce and the Prince George's County Board of Trade.

A lifelong County resident with a vested interest in our community's quality of life, Doug served the Prince George's Literacy Council as a volunteer reading

tutor; the Boys & Girls Clubs as a football referee; and he was a member of the Mitchellville School of Fine Arts board.

Guided by his deep and abiding faith, these words from Pope Francis are reflective of Doug's service. "Dear friends, look at the real heroes who come to light in these days; they are those who are giving themselves in order to serve others."

May his life and enduring legacy continue to be a blessing to us all, and a comfort to his wife and family.

**Statement—  
District 4 Council Member  
Ingrid Watson on the Passing of  
Former Council Member Doug Peters**

I am heartbroken over the passing of our beloved Sen. Doug Peters. He was highly respected and greatly admired throughout District 4, Prince George's County and the State of Maryland. Doug was a friend, a mentor and a trusted advisor. His love for the community was unmatched by his love for his wife and his family. Please keep his wife Corinne, children and grandchildren in your prayers.



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

Ranger Milbourne and Mo in the White House Rose Garden.

## Maryland Park Service Rangers Bring Bald Eagles to the White House

*Rehabilitated eagles are ambassadors for  
environmental action and the Endangered Species Act*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Natural Resources

Two winged representatives from the Maryland Park Service attended the White House [last] month.

Rehabilitated bald eagles Buck and Mo, along with a contingent of Maryland Park Service Rangers, were invited to the White House to celebrate the anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which was signed into law 50 years ago this week.

"Bald eagles are such a powerful symbol, both of our country and of the effect we can have on protecting the environment," said Maryland Park Service Director Angela Crenshaw, who spoke at the celebration. "It was amazing to go to the White House and share the story of our two eagles."

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## Prince George's County Department of Social Services, HRC Join Record Number of Partners Working on LGBTQ+ Inclusivity

*New Report: 172 agencies partner with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's All Children - All Families program, including Prince George's County Department of Social Services, and together serve more than 1.4 million clients annually.*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Health & Human Services,  
Prince George's County

LANDOVER, Md. (Dec. 21, 2023)—Prince George's County Department of Social Services is proud to be one of 172 child welfare organizations joining the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's All Children - All Families (ACAF) program in 2023, as highlighted in a new report. Together, these organizations work to improve the services provided to the LGBTQ+ community, including children in foster care and prospective foster and adoptive parents who are LGBTQ+. This year alone, this multi-organization partnership assessed 9,500+ policies and practices within child welfare organizations to ensure they meet ACAF best practices criteria—approximately 6,000 more than were assessed when this report was first released in 2019. This allowed for over 1.4 million children, youth, and families across 43 states to benefit from these LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices.

"Providing children and families with the most inclusive environment in which to grow should always be the number one priority," said Phii Regis, Director of HRC's All Children - All Families Program. "We are grateful for Prince George's County Department of Social Services' work as part of this partnership—together, we can win the fight for equality and build safe and loving communities at the same time."

"The Prince George's County Department of Social Services has been a steadfast advocate for the diverse needs of our youth for years. We are proud of our efforts to ensure all children receive the programs and services that promote their stability, safety and wellbeing," said Director Gloria Brown Burnett. "Our Child, Adult, & Family Services Division is recognized at the highest tier of recognition for our Innovative Inclusion in 7 key policy and practice areas. (There are only SIX (6) public child welfare

agencies at this tier, nationwide!) Additionally, we are recognized as a Top LGBTQ+ Inclusive Adoption and Foster Care Agency for our matching and placement services and inclusive policies and practices when it comes to engagement, recruitment, and best practice with LGBTQ+ families and community," adds Lauren Wethers-Coggins the agency's AFFIRM Program Coordinator.

This report comes at a time when LGBTQ+ people, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, are under threat. Laws and policies protecting LGBTQ youth in foster care from discrimination are a patchwork from state to state. Only 13 states and the District of Columbia have explicit laws or policies in place to protect foster youth from discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity. Seven additional states explicitly protect foster youth from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation but not gender identity. Approximately 1 in 3 youth in foster care are LGBTQ+, and laws that attack them on the basis of sexuality and gender put an already vulnerable community at risk. When they aren't allowed in homes that support them, LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of abuse and mistreatment than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Data shows 44% of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody were removed, ran away, or thrown out of their home for reasons directly related to their identity.

At the same time, there are an overwhelming number of LGBTQ+ families who have at least considered adopting or fostering a child in the future, but 55% of them feared being turned away because of their identity, and only 14% knew of an LGBTQ+-inclusive agency near them. One couple was quoted in the report as having been rejected from two child welfare agencies on the basis of their identity before finally being accepted to foster with an ACAF partner agency: "[I] got rejected twice from two different agencies and I didn't see how going to another agency was going to make

any difference. One day I was just browsing online and I found a foster care licensing agency and they [had] the LGBT flag so I called them and I found that, yeah, they're inclusive to everybody. It's kind of like it was meant to be."

With the work of ACAF, A record-breaking 10,650+ professionals were trained in how to make their agencies as inclusive of LGBTQ+ families and youth as possible. Additionally, all partner organizations that earned a Tier of Recognition with the program, such as Prince George's County Department of Social Services, now include "sexual orientation," "gender identity" and "gender expression" in their client non-discrimination policy, and communicate this policy to staff and clients. They also documented client forms featuring gender-neutral language, such as "Parent 1" and "Parent 2" rather than "Mother" and "Father," and they display visual cues throughout common areas to communicate support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.

To learn more about the HRC's All Children - All Families report, visit [https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-the-state-of-lgbtq-inclusion-in-childwelfare?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-the-state-of-lgbtq-inclusion-in-childwelfare?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). For more on the All Children-All Families program, visit [https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/all-children-all-families?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/all-children-all-families?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

*The Prince George's County Department of Social Services is in the business of providing opportunities for ALL residents of the County to become independent, responsible and stable members of the community. We do this by providing intervention services that strengthen families, protect children and vulnerable adults, encourage self-sufficiency and promote personal responsibility. Its AFFIRM unit gives LGBTQIA+ youth and their caregivers the opportunity to learn skills in support and celebration of their identities.*

## Prince George's County Planning Board and Planning Department Announce January 2024 Events and Meetings

By CALISTA BLACK  
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (Dec 29, 2023)—The Prince George's County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission announce their upcoming public events and meetings for January 2024. For more details, review the list of events and meetings below or visit [www.pgplanningboard.org](http://www.pgplanningboard.org) and [www.pgplanning.org](http://www.pgplanning.org). Events and meetings are subject to change.

NOTE: The M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board and Planning Department offices have relocated to Largo, MD. The new address is 1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774.

**Prince George's County  
Planning Board Meetings**  
Thursday, January 11 | 10 a.m.  
Thursday, January 18 | 10 a.m.  
Thursday, January 25 | 10 a.m.

The Prince George's County Planning Board meets virtually on Thursdays to consider planning, zoning, subdivision, and other matters within its jurisdiction. The meetings may be

viewed via live streaming video. Public participation is encouraged either through a phone bridge or by using GoTo Meeting. Everyone who wishes to speak at the Planning Board meeting must register online (<https://www.pgplanningboard.org/883/Watch-Meetings>) by Noon on the Tuesday, two days prior to the Planning Board meeting. Written comments, documents, and exhibits must be received via email, fax, or mail by Noon on the Tuesday before the Planning Board meeting to be included in the record. For more details, visit: [www.pgplanningboard.org](http://www.pgplanningboard.org).

**Subdivision and  
Development Review  
Committee Meeting**  
Friday, January 5 | 9:30 a.m.  
Friday, January 19 | 9:30 a.m.

Subdivision and Development Review Committee (SDRC) is a coordination and interagency meeting early in the development review process with the applicant and M-NCPPC staff, where the public can be invited to virtually view the meeting only. The meetings

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline

### Morris Craig, Congressional Gold Medal recipient, dies at 100

Morris Dogan Craig was born in Washington November 20, 1923, one of eleven children. He attended D.C. schools and excelled at basketball and football. At age 14 he got his first job, to help out at home.

But World War II was underway and Morris and two of his friends enlisted. Leaving the DMV area for the first time in his life, he arrived in North Carolina and became one of the first 900 African American Marine recruits inducted into the Montford Point Marines.

Morris served with distinction in an anti-aircraft artillery unit on multiple islands in the South Pacific. After the war, Morris returned home from service, completed his high school education and began taking photography lessons at night. He also took advantage of the veterans' employment program to become a clerk for the federal government.

On November 19, 1949, he married Evelyn Cecilia Carey. In time, they were blessed with a large family, including son Terrence (Terry) John Craig, grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. One of those nieces is my next-door neighbor, Stacie Branham Smith. She's very proud of her amazing Uncle Morris.

He and his Marine Corps friends joined the Old Timers Over 35 Basketball Club, which led to his becoming a member of their Hall of Fame.

In 2017, Private First Class Morris Dogan Craig received the Congressional Gold Medal "for his dedication and service to his country." It is the highest civilian award bestowed by the United States Congress and is an amazing honor for his family.

He died on November 24, four days after turning 100. Services were at New Smyrna Missionary Baptist Church in Washington.

### Town of Morningside

Morningside meetings will be the Work Session on January 9 and the Town Meeting on January 16, both beginning at 7. For Morningside information call 301-736-2300.

### Neighbors & other good people

Taraji P. Henson, one of the leads in the new "The Color Purple" and in "Hidden Figures," graduated from Oxon Hill High School in 1988.

Father Peter Alliata, a priest for more than 60 years, died February 23. He was founding pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Waldorf.

In a recent column, I wished James Bruce

Thomas and his wife Nola a happy 46th anniversary. I have since learned that James died 5 years ago. He and Nola used to live on Lou Lane in Morningside. His family has since moved to St. Mary's County.

Daughter Kathleen Shearer is in town from Cincinnati. Last week we visited Dolores Steinhilber who used to live in Skyline, was the first president of the Skyline Citizens Association, and was very involved in St. Philip's Parish. She now lives in Waldorf and is limited in her activities but keeps up with everything going on. Among other Steinhilber news, she told us that her granddaughter Tara Panago is now a certified EMT in Charles County.

I hope by next week I'll have the winners of the 24th Annual Gingerbread House Contest and Show, annually staged by Darnall's Chance House Museum in Upper Marlboro. I voted for the Gingerbread House that I thought should win. Wonder if I was right.

### Maryland Route 210, one of the deadliest

The 210 Traffic Safety Committee joined Prince George's County and state leaders and residents on Dec. 22 to push for a safer 210—also known as Indian Head Highway—one of the deadliest highways in the Washington area.

The Committee is pushing for bigger fines and more speed cameras. Repeat offenders could face penalties of \$350 or more.

Last year, County Police officers issued 2,470 citations from speed cameras. It's popular with speeders; a camera recently recorded a car traveling 170 mph in a 55-mph zone.

### Places to go & things to do

The Suburban Maryland Home Show will be at the Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro Saturday, Jan. 13, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Home Show is about everything for, in and around your home, and features a wide selection of home-improvement professionals. The event is free.

### Changing landscape

Prince George's County has Curbside Composting, and I am one of its most recent composters. I have a new wheeled green cart outdoors and a kitchen pail on my countertop, so I can easily collect food scraps and leftovers to dump in the green cart. We haven't put it out for collection yet because of the holidays, but I will try to remember to do so next Monday, by 6 a.m.

When it opened more than 60 years ago,

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Dulles International Airport was the future of aviation. Over the years there have been many changes (expanded terminal, new runway, new control tower, etc.) Now it faces huge new changes, including construction of a new runway, concourses and completion of the AeroTrain System and more.

A home at 4107 Maple Road, in Morningside, has sold for \$259,000.

### Pat Clark, Census retiree

Patricia "Pat" Ann Clark, formerly of Temple Hills, died December 17 in Springfield, Va. She was born in Auburn, N.Y., daughter of Stephen and Anna Scheffic, and was the wife of the late Charles W. Clark.

She graduated from Nazareth College in Rochester, NY with a degree in Mathematics, moved to the Washington DC area and spent her career working at the Census Bureau as a statistician.

She was a longtime parishioner of St. Philip's, in Camp Springs, where she was a member of the Sodality and a Eucharistic Minister. In later years she moved to Virginia.

Survivors include daughters Janet Keeports and Margaret (Peggy) Kanyan, son George Clark and three grandchildren. She was buried from St. Raymond of Penafort Church.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Pat Spry and Janet Ferguson Hemming, Dec. 31; Sister Haimanot, Dorothy Cullinan and Bridget Vilky, Jan. 1; Evelyn Lozano, Jan. 2; Courtney Bland, Jan. 3;

Jennifer Jung, J.B. Thomas and Krista Neale, Darlie Norton, Jan. 4, Ariel Thomas, Sarah Vilky and Terry Foster, Jan. 6; Eva Huggins and Charles Boxley, Jan. 8; Patty Gallatin, Jan. 11; Martin Miller, Frank Binsted and Roc Wheeler, Jan. 13.

Happy anniversary to my grandson Isaac and Eva Gallegos, their 3rd on Dec. 31; Tom and Monique Laws, Jan. 3; my grandson Conor and Heather McHale, their 20th on Jan. 3; and my son John and Michelle McHale, their 27th on Jan. 4; James and Yvonne Ealey, their 7th on Jan. 6, and Diane and Steve Zirkle, Jan. 9.

Jack and I were married January 3, 1951, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Saginaw, Mich. We honeymooned in Traverse City and settled in Houston, Texas, where Jack was a reporter for The Houston Press. I wish he were here with me to celebrate our 73rd anniversary and our adventurous first year, but Jack died in 2004. I miss him every day.

And a Blessed 2024 to all my Readers!

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

## Brandywine-Aquasco

### CHARLIE WILSON 2024

Charlie Wilson, the highly anticipated concert, is set to take place at The Theater at MGM National Harbor on January 13, 2024, 8 p.m.–January 14, 2024, 12 a.m., located at 101 MGM National Avenue, Oxon Hill, Maryland, 20745. This venue is renowned for hosting top-notch performances that leave audiences in awe. Read more on Spotify. Information and tickets: Nightout.com Tickets, Ticketmaster.com.

### DANCING WITH THE STARS

Dancing with the Stars Friday, January 12, 8 p.m. at The Theater at MGM National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Maryland. Address is 101 MGM National Avenue, Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745. ABC's number one entertainment show is hitting the road once more this year. Featuring some of the show's most popular competitors, this live tour will include recreating the most memorable routines. Limited seats available.

### CHANCELLOR'S LIST

Congratulations to Makayla Eugene who attends NCAT. Makayla has been placed on the Chancellor's List based on her academic performance in Fall 2023. Chancellor's List recognition appears on the student's permanent academic record. To qualify for the Chancellor's List during the fall or spring semester, a full-time student must earn a semester grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.75 in 12 or more semester hours of credit. Makayla earned straight A's. Makayla is a resident of Brandywine, Maryland, daughter of Curtis and Stephanie Eugene, granddaughter of Gwendolyn DeVille and the late Francis Deville of Brandywine, Maryland.

### INTERLEDGER SUMMIT

A team of eight undergraduate and graduate Bowie State University students recently attended Interledger Summit 2023 in Costa Rica where they enhanced their knowledge for the protocol to create an interoperable open payments network to enable people and businesses around the globe to pay directly for goods or services using digital currency.

At the summit, students had the opportunity to showcase projects they had developed to support interledger's mission of making open payments network accessible to people everywhere, particularly those in marginalized communities. The students also learned more about digital financial platforms and Interledger's value proposition.

"Interledger's Summit offered a phenomenal opportunity for students to showcase their progression with digital financial services from awareness through courses, workshops and collaboration through micro-internships," said Dr. Andrew Mangle, professor of

management information systems in the College of Business. "Bowie State is committed to working directly with the Interledger Foundation to support historically marginalized groups to create and connect them to inclusive financial services."

The Interledger Protocol creates an interoperable open payments system that is not limited by currencies or location. Challenges they face range from technical requirements connecting the unbanked to effectively communicating to people the importance of participating in the paradigm shift of regularly using digital financial services. The ultimate goal of open payment systems is to make sending money as simple and easy as sending an email.

Felicia Ilori, a graduate student who attended the Interledger Summit, participated as a panelist and the micro-internship program. Ilori says "there are all types of customized projects that need to be implemented to help people understand the technology and benefits of using the Interledger Protocol to facilitate an open payment system."

"The conference really opened my eyes," said Ilori. "Just being there and meeting students from other colleges and universities was encouraging because we're striving for the same goal."

A portion of the \$150,000 grant Bowie State received from the Interledger Foundation this year for engaging HBCU students to support digital financial inclusion was used to fund the trip to Costa Rica. Last year nine students traveled to New Orleans to attend the Interledger Summit also enabled by funds from the Foundation. MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, dlthompson@bowiestate.edu, 301-860-4311.

### THE YEAR

"The previous year sat pondering the edge of his life's span. As the new year skipped gleefully by, he thought to himself. He is just starting his honeymoon. The first month is always the best but the remainder of the year will be his true measuring test. As any of the alumnus years will tell you while the months age, you will learn many things. I wonder what this year coming up will offer and bring."

"Happy days balanced by sad events. Will it be the year that bring the Third World War? Or the one that freezes a majority of popular lives. Will it choose to escort brutal disaster too, the world stopping the pulse of the universe, leaving us all to die."

"Or will you be the year caring enlighten, understanding and peace? The one that future years can be measured against. The one to carry the torch forward for all of God's bestowment of light and love. Will you be the year that makes a major difference? Will you be the one that God has delivered from above?" Poem written by my best friend Poet Joan Hayes.

## Around the County

### PGSPCA Low Cost Shot Clinic

Sunday, January 7, 2024, No Appointment Needed

The Prince George's County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PGSPCA) is holding walk-in, low-cost vaccination clinics for cats and dogs, on the first Sunday of the month, from 1–3 p.m. at 8210 D'Arcy Road in Forestville, Maryland. No appointment is needed. The gates open at 1 p.m., and anyone in line by 3 p.m. will be served. All dogs MUST be leashed or in a carrier. All cats MUST be in a carrier.

Cash or credit card only; no checks. Without documentation of a prior rabies vaccine, your pet's rabies vaccine will expire in one year.

For more information, visit [www.pgspca.org/clinic/shots](http://www.pgspca.org/clinic/shots).

—DoE - Animal Chatter News, Dec. 28, 2023

### Compost Your Christmas Tree

The Department of the Environment (DoE) is making it easy for residents to "recycle" cut, live Christmas trees (no artificial trees) by offering curbside pickup and a drop-off location.

Christmas tree collection will run from **January 8 to January 30, 2024**. Residents with County-provided yard trim collection may place their undecorated, unbagged, live Christmas trees at the curb by 6 a.m. on Mondays.

For more information, please call PGC311 or visit [environment.mypgc.us](http://environment.mypgc.us).

—The DoE Sprout, December 21, 2023

### "The Super Girls Group" Live Performance at Harmony Hall Arts Center

RIVERDALE, Md. (Dec. 29, 2023)—Harmony Hall Arts Center, part of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, is delighted to present a unique musical ensemble that brings together five legendary singers from some of the most popular female groups of the 1950s and 1960s.

Louise Murray, Lillian Walker, Margaret Ross, Nanette Licari, and Beverly Warren have joined forces to create a spectacular show that celebrates the golden era of girl groups. The Super Girls Group has been performing to sold-out audiences across the country in venues such as: The Beacon Theatre in New York, The Chicago Theater in Illinois, Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut, and many more.

The Super Girls Group is a must-see for anyone who loves the classic sound of girl groups and wants to experience a live performance by some of the original voices behind hits such as: Lonely Nights, Tell Him, Chains, Who Do You Love, and Boy You Can't Forget. Don't miss this opportunity to see them live at Harmony Hall Arts Center on **January 13, 2024**. Tickets are available for purchase on Parks Direct website. For more information, call (301) 203-6070 or email [harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com](mailto:harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com).

### Student Winners of the Maryland Judiciary's 18th Annual Conflict Resolution Day Bookmark Art Contest are Honored by the Judiciary

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 20, 2023)—On Thursday, December 7, the Maryland Judiciary's Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) held its 18th annual bookmark art contest and announced nine student winners and 15 honorable mentions. Students were asked to create bookmarks on the theme of preventing or resolving conflicts peacefully. Contest winners in kindergarten through eighth grade were announced at an awards ceremony and reception for students and parents hosted by MACRO featuring Supreme Court of Maryland Chief Justice Matthew J. Fader, along with Justices Brynja M. Booth and Angela M. Eaves.

"It is always an honor and a privilege to meet the students and their families to congratulate them on their award-winning artwork," said Chief Justice Fader, Supreme Court of Maryland. "It is inspiring to see the students' thoughtfulness and creativity as they displayed the conflict resolution theme through their own eyes in this creative way to educate adults and children alike about peace-making and positive alternatives to violence."

The Maryland Judiciary received 3,927 bookmark entries from students at 51 public schools, two private schools, and two home-schools. The winning entries were from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Prince George's, and Queen Anne's counties.

Chief Justice Fader, joined by Justice Booth and Justice Eaves, announced the prize winners, and congratulated each student. He discussed with them the messages conveyed in their original artwork. Students created bookmarks focused on themes of resolving or preventing conflicts, apologizing, respecting differences, talking things out, solving problems together, listening, tolerance, diversity, inclusion, building peace, respecting one another, consideration for others, and alternatives to violence. Nine cash prizes totaling \$675 were awarded to the nine first, second, and third place winners.

Bookmark Contest winners for Prince George's County:

#### Grades K–2:

Honorable Mentions: **Theodore Hopkins**, Vansville Elementary, Prince George's (Kindergarten)

#### Grades 3–5:

Third Place Winner: **Jonathan Brooks**, Vansville Elementary, Prince George's (Grade 5).

#### Grades 6–8:

Honorable Mentions: **Tuan Nhat Huy Le**, Benjamin D. Foulois Creative and Performing Arts School, Prince George's (Grade 7)

### Clarke University Fall Dean's List

DUBUQUE, Iowa (Dec. 26, 2023)—Clarke University is proud to announce that 188 students earned a spot on the Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. The list recognizes full-time Clarke students who have earned a 3.65 grade-point average or above, on a 4.0 scale, with a minimum of 12 graded hours. Please join us in congratulating these students on their hard work!

Bowie, MD: **Mannix Amos**

# COMMUNITY

## Hospice of the Chesapeake News and Events

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

### SAVE-THE-DATE:

**Popular Calvert County Culinary Event Returns for its 11th Year**  
PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. (Dec. 20, 2023)—Hospice of the Chesapeake, is pleased to announce that its 11th annual Culinary Event will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. **Friday, March 22**, at The Hall at Huntingtown, 4030 Old Town Road in Huntingtown, Maryland.

The evening will begin with a cocktail hour, followed by delicious dishes created by Maryland Country Caterers, all designed to delight your palate. The band Nightlife will provide music for entertainment and dancing throughout the evening. The evening features both a live auction and silent auction filled with travel packages and experiences from those in the community.

All proceeds from this event will be used to grow and strengthen programs in Calvert County and provide direct support to local patients and families living with illness and loss.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact the events team at 443-837-1531 or events@hospicechesapeake.org. For additional event details and to purchase tickets please visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/culinary-event>.

### 10 Clinical Hospice Professionals Awarded Through Innovative Professional Program

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 21, 2023)—Two social workers, three chaplains and five registered nurses are being celebrated for completing an innovative professional program pioneered by Hospice of the Chesapeake.

The Clinical Ladder program, launched in early 2023, recognizes team members for their clinical expertise, professional and educational achievements, and contributions to the hospice team as well as the full organization. The inaugural year awardees and their achievement levels are Abbey Blick, Nursing Level 3; Karen Crosby, Nursing Level 3; Nancy Deal, Nursing Level 2; Cindy Ferciot, Nursing Level 2; Britney Gilliland, Nursing Level 2; Amanda Lindsey, Social Work Level 2; Aleece Sewell, Social Work Level 3; Renee Norwood, Chaplain Level 2; Annie Smith, Chaplain Level 2; and Sara Swinson, Chaplain Level 2.

Participants in this self-propelled program control how they live the not-for-profit's core values of courage, excellence, empowerment, and service with a focus on their own career progression and advancement. Not only are they rewarded with bonuses and other incentives, but they inspire everyone around them. Most importantly, they ensure patients and families have meaningful experiences every day.

"The Clinical Ladder program is a way for nurses, social workers and spiritual care providers to grow within their professional practice, especially from a community health perspective," Director of Education and Emergency Management Elisabeth Smith, MS, BSN, RN, CHPN, said. "We also see it as a valuable tool to keep and recruit the best hospice care professionals by rewarding them for that growth."

The Clinical Ladder initiative at Hospice of the Chesapeake was created and continues to be supported by The Jim & Linda Humphrey Foundation Fund with a focus on professional development for hospice and palliative care professionals.



### Hospice of the Chesapeake Celebrates Highly Successful First Year With NICHE

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 20, 2023)—Hospice of the Chesapeake is celebrating the graduation of seven registered nurses and 46 certified nursing assistants in a prestigious training program. It marks a highly successful first year as a member of the Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders, or NICHE, program of New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing.

The program helped the not-for-profit hospice organization train nurses to become key leaders in the NICHE Leadership Training Program. In turn, they led their team's certified nursing assistants using an action plan to drive quality and support in developing age-friendly care for adults ages 65 and older.

"By joining NICHE, the leadership of Hospice of the Chesapeake has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring evidence-based, person-centered care for older adults. Additionally, with NICHE membership, these leaders validate the vital role of nurses in transforming the care older adults receive," NICHE Executive Director, Mattia Gilmartin Ph.D., RN, FAAN said. "Older adults have unique needs, and, with NICHE, the organization will be better positioned to meet those needs."

By completing the program, nurses earned the designation of Geriatric Resource Nurse, or GRN, and nursing assistants earned Geriatric Patient Care Associate, or GPCA. Many of these staff reported learning gains from this additional evidence-based training focused on the specific needs of their elder population. Hospice of the Chesapeake's Director of Education and Emergency Management Elisabeth Smith, MS, BSN, RN, CHPN, and her colleagues are looking forward to seeing more team members earn their NICHE certification in their goal to standardize their organization's elder care.

"We are wildly excited by the number of team members that have completed the NICHE learning pathways already. This number of completions was more than we anticipated for our first year and reflects the strong desire of our clinicians for ongoing learning," Smith said. "The interest has been so widespread that we anticipate most of our nursing assistants will have completed this training by the end of 2024."

*The goal of Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) of NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing is to impart principles and tools to stimulate changes in clinical practice to achieve patient-centered nursing care for older adults in healthcare facilities. NICHE membership is only available to facilities that provide care for older adults. For more information, visit [nicheprogram.org](http://nicheprogram.org).*

*Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. For more information, please visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).*

### Eagles from A1

The bald eagle was one of the first species to be protected under the Endangered Species Act and represents a prominent success story of the law, as America's national bird now has hundreds of thousands of breeding pairs across the country.

The two eagles are part of the Maryland Park Service's Scales & Tales program, an environmental initiative that fosters stewardship of wildlife and natural resources. By telling the stories of Maryland's raptors and providing opportunities for close observation, Park Service staff seek to educate the public about habitat loss, climate change and biodiversity.

The White House visit had a similar educational purpose, but on a national stage. Ranger Sarah Milbourne, the western region manager for the Park Service and an eagle handler, said the visit took a lot of planning and preparation.

"You're trying to make sure everything is perfect, but when you're working with live animals, you just hope the training pays off," Milbourne said. "When we got on site, everything went beautifully, everything worked out."

Mo, who is named after Michelle Obama, was a natural in front of the crowd that gathered in the Indian Treaty Room in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, and she later posed for photos in the Rose Garden.

"I was talking about the Endangered



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

Maryland Park Service Rangers escort the bald eagles through the White House.

Species Act," Crenshaw said, "and Mo was making noises and piping, and I said, 'Yes ma'am, tell them!'"

Buck was a bit more reserved, and he preferred a perch with a view of a window during the visit. A few animals from the Maryland Zoo, including a penguin, a screech owl and an indigo snake, were also visiting to showcase species that have benefited from environmental protections.

Both eagles are unable to fly due to

injuries and now live in state parks, where they remain healthy after medical treatment and rehabilitation. Buck was rescued from the side of a road in 2012 and resides in Tuckahoe State Park. Mo was found with broken bones near Conowingo Dam and lives at Rocky Gap State Park.

Prior to the Endangered Species Act becoming law, the population of bald eagles in the U.S. had dropped to dangerously low levels by the 1960s, due to pesticide use, illegal hunting, habitat loss and other factors. DDT, a widely-used pesticide, caused eagles and other raptors to produce thin eggshells that resulted in poor reproduction rates.

With careful management and protection efforts, including the banning of DDT, bald eagles came back from the brink and are now plentiful across the country. They were reclassified from "endangered" to "threatened" in 1995, then fully removed from the Endangered Species List in 2007 and from the Maryland endangered list in 2010.

There are now more than 316,000 bald eagles in the lower 48 states, including nearly 3,000 nesting pairs in the Chesapeake Bay region.

As a success story of endangered species protection, the bald eagles show how the Endangered Species Act is critical in its current form and can also be enhanced to meet the challenges of the world today, Milbourne said.

See EAGLES Page A4



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

President Joe Biden speaks with Ranger Jessica Conley, Ranger Sarah Milbourne, and Maryland Park Service Director Angela Crenshaw about bald eagles and America's parks.

## EarthTalk® New Year's Resolutions: Think Green This Year

Dear EarthTalk:

*What are some New Year's Resolutions I can make to help the environment?*

—M. Lind, Sturges, MI

Given the escalating environmental challenges facing our planet, directing some of our New Year's aspirations toward eco-conscious endeavors can make a tangible difference. Luckily there are lots of ways to put your resolve to work for the planet...

For starters, one of the most impactful resolutions is to adopt a more mindful approach to consumption. Commit to reducing waste by embracing practices like reusing, repurposing and recycling. Shift to buying reusable items and those with minimal packaging. Support brands committed to sustainable practices. Minimize your use of single-use plastics, another way to make a big impact without much effort. Choose stainless-steel water bottles, cloth shopping bags and glass food containers. Say no to plastic straws, cutlery and excessive packaging whenever possible.

Making more sustainable food choices is yet another way to make 2024 greener than 2023. Adopting a more plant-based diet or reduce meat consumption to significantly reduce environmental impact. Pledge to support local, organic and sustainably sourced foods. Also, strive to reduce food waste by planning meals, composting organic waste and supporting initiatives that redistribute surplus food to those in need. Another resolution that of us can

make is to reduce personal carbon emissions. Embrace alternatives to fossil fuel-based transportation by walking, cycling, carpooling or using public transit. Also, consider investing in energy-efficient appliances, using renewable energy sources, and supporting initiatives that offset carbon emissions. While they might not be top of mind, changing up daily habits can also reduce your carbon footprint and overall environmental impact. Conserve water by fixing leaks, taking shorter showers and using water-saving appliances. Grow your own food, support local biodiversity by planting native species, and prioritize eco-friendly practices in your daily routine.

Another way to create positive change is to speak out more for environmental policies and initiatives. Support community groups and environmental organizations, and join in local clean-up efforts



CREDIT: PEXELS.

**It's that time of year again when you have to make some New Year's resolutions. How about factoring in climate and the environment this year?**

or conservation projects. Engage in discussions, educate others, and advocate for sustainable practices in your workplace, schools and social circles. Spread awareness about environmental issues and inspire others to take action. Share information on social media, organize educational events, or start a community garden or recycling program. Encourage friends, family and colleagues to join in your eco-friendly endeavors, fostering a collective effort toward a greener future.

Making a resolution is just the first step—commitment is key to achieving lasting change. Progress may require adjustments and perseverance, but every step contributes to a healthier planet. By incorporating these resolutions into your New Year's goals, you become an active participant in the global movement toward environmental stewardship. Together, let us embark on this journey to protect and preserve the natural world we all call home. Cheers to a more sustainable, eco-conscious year ahead!

**CONTACTS:** 10 Sustainable New Year's Resolutions, <https://www.centerforecotechnology.org/10-easy-green-new-years-resolutions/>. 12 Actionable and Sustainable New Year's Resolutions, <https://greencitizen.com/blog/sustainable-new-years-resolutions/>

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# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## A New Year's Charge

As this holy season in so many faith traditions comes to a close, this is always a time to take stock and embrace the lessons that can be taken from this season with us into the New Year. This year finds us once again in the middle of perilous times for our nation and world. Yet one of the lessons of this season of light at the darkest time of the year is that this is the time when change begins. I share again an adapted version of Madeleine L'Engle's poem "First

Coming" (used by permission in my book *Guide My Feet* as published in *Imagining the Word*):

God did not wait till the world was ready,  
till . . . nations were at peace.  
God came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.

God did not wait for the perfect time.

God came when the need was deep and great.  
God dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.

God did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
God came, and God's Light would not go out.

God came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

I also share the words of beloved theologian Howard Thurman, who speaks to this moment in

"The Work of Christmas":

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among the people,  
To make music in the heart.

These words are once again a reminder and encouragement for all we must and will do in the new year. Let's commit to moving forward together with purpose, determination, gratitude, and joy.

—December 29, 2023

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Hate Speech Has no Place on College Campuses or Anywhere Else

"Addressing hate speech does not mean limiting or prohibiting freedom of speech. It means keeping hate speech from escalating into something more dangerous, particularly incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, which is prohibited under international law."

—United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

Calling for the genocide of Jews, or of any people, is hate speech that is incompatible with American values and the U.S. Constitution.

As Americans, we cherish our constitutional right to free expression as passionately as we abhor bigotry, discrimination, and injustice. In the words of Voltaire biographer Evelyn Beatrice Hall, often misattributed to Voltaire himself, "I disapprove of

what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

But we also live by another principle, expressed in an adage whose origins have been lost to time: Your right to swing your fist ends where my nose begins.

Nowhere is this paradox more vividly illustrated than on the campuses of our nation's colleges and universities, where conflicting ideologies are passionately debated. The lectures of controversial public figures are protested and boycotted. Outspoken professors ignite controversy and invite censure. Students are challenged by seemingly radical new perspectives they may be encountering for the first time.

But a university's status as a thriving laboratory of thought—a place where the "fists" of free ex-

pression are swung zealously and audaciously—does not absolve it of the responsibility to safeguard its students' safety and security.

During testimony before Congress earlier this month, the presidents of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and MIT declined to say whether calls for the genocide of Jews would violate their schools' conduct policies.

The backlash led Penn's President Liz Magill to resign, and ignited a national debate over what constitutes hate speech and whether it should be tolerated on campuses in the name of freedom of expression.

To be clear, all three presidents have since clarified that antisemitism, in all its many and insidious forms, is at odds with the universities' values. And while the universities "embrace a commitment to free expression, even of views that are objectionable, offensive, hateful," as Harvard President Claudine Gay testified, their policies prohibit bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

This is, in theory, the balance that universities should endeavor to strike. What's hard to understand is why the presidents declined to affirm during their testimony that calls for violence against Jews around the world do violate their policies against bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

In written testimony submitted prior to her appearance before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Magill said that Penn has "zero tolerance for violence or speech intended to incite it."

After the hearing, Gay issued a statement saying "There are some who have confused a right to free expression with the idea that Harvard will condone calls for violence against Jewish students. Let me be clear: Calls for violence or genocide against the Jewish community, or any religious or ethnic group are vile, they have no place at Harvard, and those who threaten our Jewish students will be held to account."

It's unfortunate their testimony to the Committee was not equally unambiguous.

Contrary to some of the commentary presidents' testimony, the First Amendment does not protect this kind of hate speech. In its landmark decision in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* in 1969, the U.S. Supreme Court held that speech can be prohibited if it is "directed at inciting or producing imminent lawless action" and it is "likely to incite or produce such action."

Antisemitic incidents in the United States have soared since the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas, according to ADL, which has tracked at least 40 incidents of physical assault, 337 incidents of vandalism, and 749 incidents of verbal or written harassment.

We must create climates on college campuses that make it clear to students that their right to free speech will be protected, but that condemnation of people based on race, religion, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation is inconsistent with the responsibility that goes along with the exercise of free speech and can lead to tragic consequences.

—December 23, 2023

## Metro Advises Customers of a Four-day Closure Impacting the Blue, Orange, and Silver Lines During the Martin Luther King Day Holiday Weekend

By PRESS OFFICER  
WMATA

During the Martin Luther King Day holiday weekend, starting on **Friday, Jan. 12 through Monday, Jan. 15**, Metro will close segments of the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines, between Foggy Bottom and Arlington Cemetery/Clarendon to perform infrastructure repairs and maintenance. The Rosslyn and Court House stations will be closed, and free shuttle buses will provide frequent service between all affected stations.

The four-day closure will allow Metro to address critical repairs, infrastructure improvements and other maintenance at one time. The same work would have required multiple weekends of single tracking with severe disruption to service, including some lines operating every 26 minutes or with truncated service.

The work is scheduled for the MLK holiday weekend when it will impact the fewest customers. Ridership during the four-day period is historically 27 percent lower on Metrorail than the average Friday through Monday. Additionally, with post-pandemic changes 15 percent fewer customers use Metrorail on Fridays than the midweek peak and on MLK Day ridership is less than half of a normal Monday.

The Rosslyn tunnel beneath the Potomac

River is one of the busiest sections of the system, with trains passing through every three to four minutes all day causing more frequent wear on the infrastructure.

During the weekend crews plan to replace dozens of concrete grout pads, which support the rails. To do this, the rails must be removed, and the old grout pads demolished. After framing, new concrete will be poured with additional time needed to set. The work will be coupled with installation of new rails, fasteners, platform edge lighting and fiber-optic cables, drain maintenance, and welding rails together to eliminate joints for a smoother, better ride.

Outside of the work zone, Blue Line trains will run from Franconia-Springfield to Arlington Cemetery and Foggy Bottom to Downtown Largo; Orange Line service will operate from Vienna to Clarendon and Foggy Bottom to New Carrollton; and Silver Line trains will run between Ashburn and Clarendon only.

Travelers over the holiday weekend going to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport may use the Yellow Line via Gallery Place or L'Enfant Plaza as an alternative with service operating every six minutes during weekday peak periods and eight minutes at all other times. Customers may also use the Manassas Line on VRE to connect to the Blue or Yellow lines at Alexandria. South of

the airport, the Blue and Yellow lines will continue to be available for customers with no impact for those headed to the airport.

Customers traveling through Washington Dulles International Airport should allow additional time for shuttle buses to connect to the Silver Line. Additional details will be provided on shuttle buses and other travel alternatives in January.

In addition, Saturday, Jan. 13 and Sunday, Jan. 14, the MDOT MTA Purple Line project will also be doing construction, impacting Metro's Red Line. There will be no Red Line service between Takoma and Forest Glen. The Silver Spring Station will be closed. Trains will operate in two segments from Shady Grove to Takoma and Glenmont to Forest Glen. Metro will utilize the closure to perform leak mitigation, replace rail ties, and preparatory work for switch replacement.

Customers are encouraged to sign up for MetroAlerts text or email messages for the latest service information or follow us on X @wmata @metrorailinfo @metrobusinfo. Metro's customer service team is also available to respond to social media, email, chat, or by phone at 202-637-7000 (automated information available 24/7) weekdays from 7 a.m.–8 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

### Eagles from A3

While images of bald eagles adorn artworks and surfaces throughout the building, the living animals are a rare sight in the halls of the executive branch, and the two Maryland eagles received a celebrity welcome.

"People were so excited about us being there," Milbourne said. "Everyone was like, 'You're the park rangers with the eagles!'"

As the Park Service delegation wheeled the eagles through the executive buildings, they were met with ecstatic reactions from White House staff, Secret Service and Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff.

"I had one person tell me, 'You've brought more smiles to the White House than I've ever seen,'" Crenshaw said.

Maryland Park Rangers Jessica Conley, Ashlee Reinke, Erin Gale, Manny Toscana, and Erin Swale joined Rangers Crenshaw and Milbourne at the event to help handle the two eagles and share the birds' stories.

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Governor Moore Announces Appointments to the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 26, 2023)—Governor Wes Moore today announced appointments to the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, which advises the governor on issues that affect Maryland's Asian-Pacific Americans. Yang Yu will serve as chair.

The new appointees bring direct ties to a range of Asian Pacific countries, deep track records of leadership and engagement in local Asian Pacific American communities, and a range of professional expertise—from business ownership to education and com-

County and is an active member of the Rotary Club.

**Isabelle Balakit**, (Filipino), is a former board member of the Department of Justice Asian Pacific American Employees Association. She also served as an outreach coordinator for the Center for Abused Persons for Charles County, providing interviews with victims of domestic violence.

**Julia Chang**, (South Korean), is the founder and business development director of the U.S. Taekwondo Academy, as well as Mrs. Maryland America 2021 and 2023. She is a health and fitness mindset coach, speaker, and writer who helps women grow

**Amy Jean Chung Fry**, (South Korean), is the chief of staff for **Prince George's County** Council member Jolene Ivey. She also serves as the Ward 6 council member and vice mayor of Chevy Chase and is the first East Asian American to fill an elected seat in Chevy Chase.

**Brian Gerardo**, (Filipino), is senior associate of learning and capacity building at The Annie E. Casey Foundation. He is founder and president of the Baltimore chapter of the National Association of Asian American Professionals, a founding member of the Baltimore City Mayor's AAPI Advisory Committee and is a Teach For America alumnus.

**Dr. Eugenia Henry**, (Taiwanese), is the founder and president of H2O Clinical, LLC, a company that performs data management for clinical trials. She is also the founder of the Global Federation of Chinese Business Women Baltimore Chapter and a former commissioner on the Maryland Commission for Women.

**Larry La**, (Vietnamese), is the founder and chief executive officer of Meiwah Restaurant

Group, a founding member of the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce for the Capital City Area, as well as the founder and vice president of Business Development of the U.S.-Asia Links, LLC, an international trading company that promotes trade between the U.S., China and Vietnam.

**Alanna Lee**, (South Korean), is vice president of The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council Washington chapter, treasurer of Korean American Association of USA, chief of staff of the Federation of Korean Association USA, and former president of the Montgomery County Korean American Association. She is also the office manager of Champion Martial Arts Academy.

**Kuan Lee, JD**, (Taiwanese), is a senior attorney advisor in the Office of Appellate Operations at the U.S. Social Security Administration. He is a member of Leadership Anne Arundel, former president and founding member of Taiwan Sister Cities, and chair of the Rockville Yilan Sister City Committee.

**Dr. Ping Lu**, (Chinese), is a retired cardiologist with long ties

to Maryland's Asian American community. She is the first female president of the Chinese Alumni Associations of Greater Washington, founding advisor of the Capital Youth Outreach Club and president of the Zhejiang University Alumni Association of Greater Washington, DC.

**Thai Nguyen**, (Vietnamese), is a former social worker at the Department of Health and Human Services and is now the president of New Hampshire Car Wash. He serves as a senior advisor for the Vietnamese Senior Association of Maryland.

**Jarrett Stoltzfus**, (Chinese, from Hong Kong), was vice mayor of **Mt. Rainier** and has served as a city council member of Ward 2 since 2021. He is the co-founder of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Clean Energy, a professional group to support Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and allies that work in clean energy, clean transportation and climate solutions; and is one of the founding members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Democratic Club of **Prince George's County**.

**Tho Tran**, (Vietnamese), is

the founder and executive director of Vietnamese American Services, Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps Vietnamese immigrants with advocacy, health care, senior programs, English as a Second Language and workforce training.

**Roxanne Yamashita**, PhD, (Polynesian), is a bioinformatics scientist with the National Center for Biotechnology Information at the National Institutes of Health. She is the executive director of the non-profit Small Things Matter, which provides supplemental food to more than 5,000 food insecure individuals in Montgomery County and **Prince George's County**.

**Lili Zhang**, (Chinese), is senior advisor of the U.S.-China Chamber of Commerce and has served as a commissioner of the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs in Maryland, as president of America Mazu Cultural Exchange Association, as president of American Li Yun Foundation and as president of The Union of Chinese American Professional Organization.

### Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

## Are Spousal Benefits Always a Factor?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

**Dear Rusty:** Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives. When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each, or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated - based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire? **Signed: Looking Ahead**

**Dear Looking:** Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation. The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings (AIME)—essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount—is first determined. Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount (PIA) is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained (as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms).

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA — the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed. The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost" from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if claiming before FRA, marital status, and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.AmacFoundation.org](http://www.AmacFoundation.org)) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at [www.amac.us/join-amac](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

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## Governor Moore Announces Appointments to the Maryland Commission on African Affairs

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 19, 2023)—Governor Wes Moore today announced appointments to the Governor's Commission on African Affairs, a group of business and community leaders from Western Maryland to the state's southern tip selected for their far-reaching professional and personal ties to the African continent and Maryland's diverse African communities. Chukwunonso "Vincent" Iweanogwe will serve as chair.

The Governor's Commission on African Affairs serves as an advisory board to the Governor and agencies within the executive department on matters relating to the African diaspora of Maryland, including economic, workforce and business development.

The appointees include:

**Chukwunonso "Vincent" Iweanogwe** (Nigerian), chair, is the president and chief executive officer of Havit Inc. and the chief financial consultant for the Republic of Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. He is also the inaugural chair of the African Diaspora Advisory Board for **Prince George's County**, where he actively fosters collaboration within the African diaspora community.

**Dr. Alemseged Abbay** (Ethiopian) is a professor in Frostburg State University's Department of History, specializes in global history, African history, Middle Eastern history, the comparative history of genocide, and African American studies. He actively presents his research at national and international conferences, contributing significantly to the fields of ethnic studies and African affairs.

**Topé Adeyoju** (Nigerian) is a change management consultant, government contractor and advocate for the growth of minority-owned organizations. He was responsible for the creation of a proprietary database, connecting with more than 500,000 African households and numerous professionals and businesses throughout North America.

**Adebowale "Shola" Ajayi** (Nigerian) serves as a senior campaign coordinator and racial justice facilitator for the Service Employee International Union. His professional background includes legislative lobbying and labor advocacy, and he leads an initiative to develop essential infrastructure for a school in Agbowo-Ikosi, Nigeria.

**Adedana Ashebir** (Ethiopian) most recently served as a regional director for Village Capital, where she led their Africa initiatives with a focus on energy development in Sub-Saharan Africa. She previously served as the program director for the Africa Business Fellowship at The Africa Leadership Network.

**Njukang Asong** (Cameroonian) is the president of The Friendship Circle, a non-profit dedicated to alleviating poverty within

African communities. He supports community-building between the African population and the **Prince George's County** Executive's Office, serving on the African Diaspora Advisory Board in addition to business sector and local government positions.

**Dr. Anyinke Atabong** (Cameroonian) is a dual board-certified psychiatric mental health and family nurse practitioner with nearly two decades of diverse healthcare experience. Dr. Atabong serves as the D.C.-Maryland-Virginia regional director for The African Think Tank, leveraging her unique background to bridge gaps between Africans and African Americans.

**Fatmata Barrie** (Sierra Leonean) is an experienced attorney and executive director of the Montgomery County Police Accountability Board. She is also the owner of the Barrie Law Center, specializing in immigration and special education law.

**Ian Campbell** (African American) is a seasoned professional in government affairs, diplomacy, and strategic consulting. Campbell serves as the managing partner of Manchester Global Solutions. With a wealth of experience spanning various countries, he dedicates a significant portion of his time to providing strategic consulting services in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, contributing to the success of initiatives that bridge gaps and create opportunities on the global stage and in Maryland.

**Dr. Sylvia Dasi** (Cameroonian) has a long career in molecular and clinical research. She previously served as the executive assistant for the African Women's Cancer Awareness Association and has certifications in international studies, community health work and oncology patient navigation.

**Amsale Geletu** (Ethiopian) is the owner of PMS Parking, a major parking enterprise that manages and oversees airport and venue parking lots across the D.C.-Maryland-Virginia area. She is a member of the advisory committee for Ethiopian Ambassador Fitsum Arega and is co-founder of the American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee Maryland Chapter.

**J. Wyndal Gordon** (Ghanaian, Kenyan) is an attorney whose professional and personal pursuits are driven by a deep commitment to justice and civil rights. He actively engages in community service and volunteers for various non-profit organizations, particularly focusing on championing the causes of African Americans, children and vulnerable populations.

**Dr. Jasmine Blanks Jones** (African American) is the executive director of the Center for Social Concern at Johns Hopkins University and the founder of Burning Barriers Building Bridges Youth Theatre. Her published academic work covers topics including community health education in Liberia, anti-black racism in community-based mental health services, and black

women's ethnographic practice.

**Dr. Terry V. Jones** (African American) is the chief talent and culture officer at the United States Institute of Peace. He is dedicated to improving the lives of marginalized populations globally, and to elevating members of the African diaspora both professionally and personally.

**Natalie McCabe** (African American) is a licensed mental health professional and an independent contractor at ABA Health Services, Inc, where she provides holistic therapy services for mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse. She leverages her strategic leadership skills to contribute to the growth of mental health programs that benefit the African diaspora.

**Nehdia Mumuni** (Ghanaian) is a certified anesthesiologist and the first American-born child of Ghanaian parents, who is practiced at managing the interplay between her American identity and deep ties to her African heritage. She leverages her unique perspective to assist American-born African children.

**Yodit Negede** (Ethiopian) is the international program manager at Geoscope Environmental and the owner of Pemberton Coffeehouse. She actively promotes global and state community development, establishing partnerships and supporting Ethiopian issues and humanities through her dedicated projects and initiatives.

**Maroufath Ogoussan** (Togolese) is a contract specialist at the D.C. Office of Contracting and Procurement, where she supports development of small and minority-owned businesses. She currently also volunteers for the United Nations and has contributed to data collection on e-services in Togo and Djibouti.

**Dr. James Saku** (Nigerian) is a professor at Frostburg State University, where he coordinates the African American Studies program. He is a member of the Association of American Geographers' Africa Specialty Group, the University of Cape Coast Alumni Association in North America, the Council of Ewes in North America and the Ewe Association of Washington, DC.

**Tricia Umeh** (Nigerian) is co-founder and CEO of Gabtics LLC, a startup dedicated to providing comprehensive cybersecurity, media and communications solutions with a focus on addressing economic challenges within the African community.

**Maureen Wambui** (Kenyan) is a first-generation immigrant and founder of the Immigrant and Refugee Resource Group, where she works to build meaningful relationships within the immigrant and multicultural community. She previously served on the Social Innovation Committee of International Child Advancement, an NGO empowering children in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

# COUNTY CHURCH DIRECTORY

**UNITED METHODIST**

**WESTPHALIA Christian Community Church**

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9363 D'Arcy Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD

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9 a.m.

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Fax: (301) 735-1844

Rev. Dr. Timothy West,  
Pastor

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www.westphaliaum.org

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20785 (301) 773-6655

Sunday Biblical Institute:  
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Worship:  
7:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Saturday Worship:  
6:30 p.m.

'WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS WITH JESUS':  
12 noon (The Power Hour) and 6:45 pm

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Dr. Henry P. Davis III, Pastor  
www.fhbp.org

**BAPTIST**

**First Baptist Church of College Park**

Welcomes You Where Jesus Christ Is Lord and King  
Stephen L. Wright, Sr., Pastor

5018 Lakeland Road  
College Park, MD 20740  
301-474-3995  
www.fbc-cp.org

Sunday School 9:30a.m.  
Sunday Worship 11a.m.  
Holy Communion 1st Sunday  
Wednesday Bible Study 7-8p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

**UNITED METHODIST**

**Union United Methodist Church**

14418 Old Marlboro Pike,  
Upper Marlboro, MD

**Church (301) 627-7389**

Sunday School (Children/Adults) - 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Reverend Twanda E. King,  
Pastor  
www.uumchurch.com

**S. G. Spottswood A.M.E. Zion Church**

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20785 • 301-490-2625

Rev. Ranesa Mayo, Pastor

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Matthew 28:19-20

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Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.

Soulful Thursdays  
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

**BAPTIST**

**Forest Heights Baptist Church**

We exist to strengthen your relationship with God.  
6371 Oxon Hill Road  
Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745

Sunday School (Adults & Children) - 9:30 A.M.  
Worship Service - 11:00 A.M.  
Wed. Prayer Service & Bible Study - 7:00 P.M.  
Office (301) 839-1166  
Fax (301) 839-1721  
E-mail: [FHBC@verizon.net](mailto:FHBC@verizon.net)  
Pastor: Rev. Waymond B. Duke

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Elder Willie W. Duvall, Pastor

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## Meetings from A1

are held virtually and may be viewed via live streaming video. The agendas are posted online (<https://www.mncppc.org/AgendaCenter/Subdivision-Development-Review-Committee-4>).

### Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission

Tuesday, January 16 | 6:30 p.m.  
Hosted by the Prince George's County Planning Department, the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission meeting will be held virtually on the third Tuesday of the month. For meeting details, visit [pgplanning.org/496/Whats-New](http://pgplanning.org/496/Whats-New), call 301-952-3680, or email [HistoricPreservation@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:HistoricPreservation@ppd.mncppc.org).

### M-NCPPC Full Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 17 | 10 a.m.  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission will hold its Full Commission meeting in a hybrid format from the M-NCPPC Wheaton Headquarters and via videoconference. Agenda packets will be available online <https://www.mncppc.org/AgendaCenter/Commission-Meetings-of-the-Full-MNCPPC-6>.

### Assistance

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of persons with disabilities in all its programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation. Call the Public Affairs Office at 301-952-3038, email [PublicAffairs@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:PublicAffairs@ppd.mncppc.org), or complete the online form <https://www.mncppc.org/FormCenter/Parks-Recreation-Department-5/Patron-Sign-Language-Services-Request-Fo-304>.

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